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£550k project includes new gallery to attract more visitors



From left, museum director Simon Townsend, museum trustee Alexandra Williams and chairman of trustees Bob Langton

BIG SCHEMES FOR MUSEUM

A NEW waterway gallery and a 'mini museum' for children are planned for Banbury Museum by the end of next year.

The new £550,000 project will also include space for more temporary exhibitions and an overhaul of the museum's front entrance.

Detailed plans have been unveiled by the museum's board of trustees, with the first phase of the project expected to take place next year.

Members of the board gave a presentation on the plans to Cherwell District Council's executive committee on Monday night.

The board chairman, Bob Langton, said: "It's been quite an interesting journey, challenging but most enjoyable."

"We have had research carried out to look into how we can increase the number of visitors to the museum."

"We would also like to thank the district council for giving us the faith to run the museum, and allowing us to make it sustainable."

Suzette Neptune, who heads local events company Banbury Presents, said the museum's plans were a major step in bringing in more tourists to the town. She added: "Anything that increases

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

the amount of cultural amenities and opportunities for national collections is really important for the town.

"Being able to use this cash injection will allow the museum to go even further and also develop its programme of local artists."

The waterways gallery will be dedicated to the history of the Oxford Canal and the nearby Tooleys Boatyard. It will also be rented out for multi-purpose use.

The mini-museum will include exhibitions for children and an activities area.

Phase two of the project will include a new £3million gallery expected to be completed by 2020. The plans have been drawn up by the museum's board of trustees, which also includes district councillor Tony Ilott, Oxford University head of communications and marketing Gail Anderson and freelance artist Alexandra Williams.

Museum director Simon Townsend said: "The first stage of the plan is all about the existing building, and we hope to have all the work completed in

2017. We have been able to create a development plan for the museum for the next few years."

The research also indicated that visitors want more regional and national exhibitions, and a larger resource of local history knowledge.

The museum is supported by Arts Council England and museums owned by Oxford University.

Cherwell District Council leader Barry Wood told the trust: "This is a very positive story and when we moved to the trust status we were not really sure. It was a leap of faith but it has been very encouraging."

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Stomach stabbing

BANBURY: A man was stabbed in the stomach in what police described as a “shocking assault”.

The 38-year-old was approached by a man in his 40s just before 3pm last Wednesday, near Jubilee Court.

The attacker took £200 from his victim and fled in a silver BMW 1 Series car.

The wounded man was treated at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, and has since been discharged.

It is believed the men may know each other.

Police said the attacker was black, about 5ft 7in tall, slim with short, dark hair and a thick beard.

Horse hit by a car

BANBURY: A horse was deliberately released on to a road, struck by a car and had to be put down, police have said.

The horse was hit at 7.20am last Thursday in Broughton Road. Officers believe it escaped after holes were cut in a barbed-wire fence.

PC Paul Morse, at Banbury police station, said: “What seems to be a bit of harmless fun can have serious consequences.”

Youngsters’ travel

BANBURY: Young people have until April 9 to take advantage of a cut-price travel offer.

Stagecoach Oxfordshire’s Banbury Dayrider ticket, which provides unlimited travel for 24 hours on local Stagecoach buses, is now £2 for under-19s.

The full daily adult price is £3 and the discount is to encourage more young people to use the network. Tickets can be bought on buses.

Hospital beds to be handed over to charity

14 intermediate care places to switch from NHS to save money

Megan Archer
marcher@nqo.com

A TOTAL of 14 hospital beds in Chipping Norton will no longer be managed by the NHS, after Oxfordshire County Council’s cabinet approved the move.

The intermediate beds, designed to ease the transition between hospital and home, will now be run by the charity The Orders of St John Care Trust.

Members of the Chipping Norton Hospital Action Group (HAG) have long been campaigning against the move.

The chairman of Chip-

ping Norton Town Council and member of the HAG, Mike Tysoe, said he was “extremely disappointed” by the decision.

He said: “We had 1,200 signatures on a petition for the NHS to carry on at the hospital.

“All that work we’ve done has been completely ignored by Oxfordshire County Council.

“It’s made a mockery of the entire thing.”

Intermediate care, which is what the hospital currently provides, is for people who have an illness or injury that does not require them to be in an acute bed, for example in the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. It also acts as a bridge between more intense care and a person returning home.

Rodney Rose, of Oxfordshire County Council, said: “The main reason to have 14 beds in intermedi-

ate care is for when people come out of hospital after big operations.

“But they will only remain if they are affordable. It will be an extra half million a year if they stay in NHS control.

“The Orders of St John nurses are equally qualified and are good at the job they have been asked to do.”

Keeping on the NHS nurses would cost the council £1.3million whereas having nurses from the Orders of St John would cost £800,000.

Oxfordshire County Council is currently looking at ways to save £50million from the council budget by the year 2019/2020 and is reviewing all of its services.

The council has saved about £204 million since 2010 and needs to save another £88 million by 2017/18.



Hannah Wildwood as a Syrian refugee, with Rory Parker and Katie Mackenzie, who played people traffickers

Dramatic show of exploitation

THE struggle of refugees fleeing from Syria and the threat of extremist militants are stories all too common at the moment.

Their plight was played out by drama student Hannah Wildwood, who is shown battling against human traffickers, played by Rory Parker and Katie Mackenzie.

It is part of a new play put on at Sibford School, near Banbury, by the three sixth form students aged 17 and 18.

West Ashored was devised by the class as part of the A-level drama exam, and

picks up on the headlines from last year.

Mr Parker said: “We see events hit the news but then slip away from the main headlines. By devising this piece of drama we hope to ensure that the problem isn’t forgotten.” They performed the play in front of families and friends at the school’s Oliver Studio.

The school’s head of drama, Neil Madden, said: “This is a highly political piece of work. The students have done considerable research into the subject.”

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Police and fire services integration 'no benefit to people of Oxfordshire'

PLANS to integrate the police force and fire service will not benefit the people of Oxfordshire, it has been warned.

It comes after the Government announced it would allow police and crime commissioners (PCCs) across the country to have "more responsibility" over the fire service.

It means Anthony Stansfeld, the PCC for Thames Valley, would be able to stretch his role over Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, which is run by Oxfordshire County Council.

Deputy leader of the council Rodney Rose did not welcome the proposals and said people in the county would be at a "disadvantage".

He added: "If you have something that isn't broken, then why would you fix it?"

"The basic fault is that it's a one size fits all model, with doesn't compare different fire brigades that have completely different set-ups, with ours being countywide.

"One example is that they hope to make savings by combining back office jobs, yet our fire and rescue service has already made those savings with Hampshire County Council and their fire service.

"We already cooperate on a range of issues."



School slated by Ofsted enters academies' trust

New head will take over in April to combat bullying and poor teaching quality

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

PUPILS at William Morris County Primary School may not have noticed anything different in lessons on Monday but their school is now the county's newest academy.

The Bretch Hill school made the change after an Ofsted report last May found major problems including bullying and poor quality of teaching.

It was told by the education watchdog in 2013 it required improvement but the 2015 report said the problems were worse.

It has now been taken over by the GLF Academy Trust, which runs 15 schools including ones in Surrey and Berkshire.

GLF chief executive Jon Chaloner said: "We look forward to collaborating with the William Morris community to share best practice and learning ideas."

Mr Chaloner, who has more than 20 years' experience as a



Outside of William Morris County Primary School

teacher and head, said the move to an academy would not have a large effect on pupils.

But he said the trust would work with the school to make changes necessary after consultation with teachers and staff.

Last year's Ofsted report said: "Pupils have a poor understanding of what constitutes bullying and are unclear about risk, thus compromising their ability to keep themselves safe."

"Leaders have failed to arrest a decline in the quality of teaching so pupils' achievement by the end of Key Stage 2 has fallen and is now inadequate.

"Behaviour requires improvement. Pupils do not always listen to instructions and quickly settle to work. This low-level disruption slows learning."

A new head, Julie Hiddleston – currently deputy head at Ladygrove Park Primary, Didcot – is to take over in April.

Until then, the 175-pupil school will be run by Julie Hawkins, of Hardwick School, and Dawn Shilston of Orchard Fields Primary.

The chair of governors Charlotte Christie has told parents there will be no change to staff, uniform and the school name.

Festive drink-driving figures rise

DRINK-drive figures for the festive period have been released by Thames Valley Police, with the number increasing significantly in the Oxford city region where the total rose to 23 last year compared to nine in 2014.

In Cherwell and West Oxfordshire the number of drink-

drivers caught was 29 in 2014 compared to 28 last year, while in South Oxfordshire the total number caught was 22 in 2014 and 23 last year.

Dedicated patrols were carried out regularly between December 1, 2015 and January 1, and the number of arrests across the

Thames Valley force area increased from 273 in 2014 to 325 last year.

The campaign was supported by the 'Where will you end up tonight?' campaign, which carried the theme of a mortuary to emphasise the consequences of drink-driving.

Give police feedback

OXON: Residents are invited to have their say at police meetings throughout the county.

Officers will be on hand from 2.30pm to 3.30pm to listen on Monday, February 15 at Berinsfield Primary School.

On Monday, February 22, PCSO Tarran Golby will be at Wallingford Market Place from 11am to 11.30am.

PCSO Sue Harris will be on hand on Tuesday, February 23 from 6pm to 6.30pm at the Shillingford Bridge Hotel.

On Tuesday, March 1 from 9am to 9.30am PCSO Marie Davenport will be at the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell village shop.

Burglaries warning

BANBURY: Police have warned households about a rise in burglaries.

Detective Inspector Claire Thorngate said January had seen a spike of home raids in the town.

She added: "While we are doing everything we can to identify those responsible we would ask that you be extra security conscious and vigilant at this time.

"If you see anyone acting suspiciously please call us straight away.

"Make sure all your valuables are documented, security marked and photographed."

This also applied to tools or gardening equipment in sheds and garages.

Climbing Kilimanjaro

OXON: Nine adventurers have signed up for a charity climb of Mount Kilimanjaro.

They will spend five days on the 19,341ft Tanzanian mountain in September, raising money for Helen and Douglas House. The adventure involves 16 days of trekking, climbing and camping.

To join the Conquer Kili fundraisers, email events@helenanddouglas.org.uk.

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director James Miller feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 10 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and James is finding that his approach is a major factor

in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for,

which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.' So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give James a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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'Police must be accessible after desk closures'

THAMES Valley Police must ensure all sections of society can still speak to an officer when 10 of its front counters close across Oxfordshire, the chairman of the force federation said.

Graham Smith, chairman of TVP Federation, which represents rank-and-file officers, said: "I think as long as we have got in place proper lines of communication with all sections of the community – prior to the reduction of these front counters – then I am comfortable with the decision."

The force said there are currently 34 front counters open across the region, but closures are expected to happen by April 1 this year.

Ones in line for closure are at Chipping Norton, Woodstock, Cowley, Henley, Didcot, Thame, Wantage, Faringdon, Wallingford and Carterton.

The force also estimates that by getting rid of surplus buildings it will make £29m in savings by 2021.

Mr Smith added: "There is no point in keeping a front counter open that has one visitor for every eight hours that it is open. That does not make economic sense at all."

"But we've got to make sure the ways that the public contact us are available so that every section of society has that ability to speak to a police officer."

A survey of more than 9,000 people by the force revealed "86 percent of people prefer to contact police on the phone in a non-emergency".

Deputy chief constable John Campbell said members of the public would still be within 10 miles of a counter, and added: "I wish to reassure the public we are not withdrawing from our communities; availability and visibility of police officers to attend incidents is not affected by front counter opening times."

Option for tenants to buy their home

People can volunteer for pilot scheme to purchase properties at a discount

Sophie Grubb
sgrubb@nqo.com

TENANTS of a housing association will get help to buy their homes in a pilot scheme.

People living in Sovereign properties can now volunteer for a Right to Buy scheme, which is gradually being rolled out by the Government.

The nationwide scheme – which is open to tenants in Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire – could help people buy their homes at a discount of up to £77,900.

Ann Santry, Sovereign's chief executive, said: "We know many of our residents want to own their own home and by being part of this limited pilot we'll help them fulfil that aspiration."

"We also want to make sure that every home sold is replaced, so our supply of new affordable homes is not diminished for those in housing need in the future."

Sovereign is one of five housing associations taking part in the pilot.



Sovereign tenants will have the option of avoiding the trek around estate agents and go straight for buying their rented homes in the pilot scheme

Allocations are limited and made on a first-come, first-served basis, with money from the sales reinvested into new affordable housing.

Successful applicants must meet criteria including having been a tenant of a housing asso-

ciation, council or similar public sector landlord for at least 10 years, and having the funds to pay.

Tenants can apply at sovereignliving.org.uk/vrtb, but must pay a £250 administration fee if they qualify.

The first sales through are expected to be completed in summer.

DONATION TO HELP CHARITY

OXON: The Oxfordshire branch of the British Red Cross has received a £600 donation to help children recovering from illness or injury.

The money is from Persimmon Homes North London's Community Champions.

It will enable the purchase of two new specialised children's wheelchairs with leg extensions.

PLANNING FOR YOUR BIG DAY

BANBURY: A wedding fair to inspire brides and grooms will take place from February 8 to 14 in the Castle Quay shopping centre.

The event – with dresses, jewellery and other wedding wares – has been organised by Smilies Cake N Pops and Amour Avenue Weddings.

Wedding fairs at the centre take place in February and September.

FAMILY-THEMED PLAY OPENS

BANBURY: The Cross Players have started their latest production at the Mill Arts Centre.

It Runs in the Family tells of a self-important neurologist who is shocked to find out he has a child from a relationship nearly 20 years ago.

Performances are daily until Saturday, each starting at 7.45pm.

SERVICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

OXON: Mental health services will be celebrated with an awareness event on February 23.

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust are hosting the event from 10am to 1pm. Guests will hear about initiatives across the county.

For location details, call Julia Stackhouse on 01865 334638.

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Group's thanks for help raising funds

PEOPLE around Banbury have raised £4,000 in support of British service personnel. Groups have been fundraising over the past year for the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF), which helps look after troops around the country.

Banbury ABF lead, and town council leader, Kieron Mallon said: "This is great news and confirms that money raised for the ABF locally here in the Banbury area is well received and well spent, directly for the benefit of the soldiers and their families who need it now and for future long-term care."

ture long-term care.

"Last year, we received £4,000 from the Middleton Cheney Village First World War centenary events and the Banbury Household Division Association, and we thank those who help this vital cause."

In the latest Third Sector Charity Brand Index, which gauges public awareness of the charity sector using surveys, ABF was ranked first out of 154 in the UK.

They were ranked on their promise to deliver on their promise to support soldiers, veterans and their families.

Name community stars

NOMINATIONS for community heroes are needed for an awards ceremony.

Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) is calling on residents to nominate people for the Oxfordshire Charity and Volunteer Awards 2016.

Organisers are looking for people to name volunteers who have made a difference to the lives of other people.

There are three volunteer award categories – Under 25s, Length of Service and General Volunteer.

The team at OCVA are also looking for residents to nominate charities, which support people in the county, within ten categories.

These are Oxfordshire Charity of the Year, Best New Group, Lifetime Achievement, Collaboration, Environmental, Management of Volunteers, Working Together, Best Promotional Campaign, Best Community Action, Best Team of Volunteers.

Nominations close at noon on April 19. See ocva.org.uk/awards for more details.

It's good news for charities



Pete Pozzoni, charity Style Acre's activity co-ordinator, left, shoots some pool with one of the service users, Ryan Gaal

Town council confirms it will treble funding pot for good causes in area

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

CHARITIES in Banbury, beset by bad news about cuts, have been given good news to shout about.

Banbury Town Council has announced it will be trebling the amount of grant funding it is offering to groups this year.

It will give away £60,000 to local charities in 2016/17, compared with about £20,000 last year.

Two years ago, Oxfordshire charity Style Acre, which supports adults with learning disabilities, received £10,000 from the council.

It allowed Style Acre to move into a new day support centre in Butchers Row in May last year, and led to the opening of a new second-hand bookshop last month.

Fundraising officer Philippa Stannard praised the council for increasing funding in the face of countywide cuts.

She said: "The council has been really generous over the past year. As small charities it can sometimes be difficult to get attention, but they have embraced us and helped us to achieve success."

"The money meant we could turn a disused, insect-infested nightclub into somewhere we can offer our support to local people."

Other charities to benefit from the council's grant funding include Age UK Oxfordshire, the Katharine House Hospice and the 1460 Squadron Banbury Air Cadets.

Ms Stannard added: "The difficulty with us is that we haven't got a big marketing department so we have to work closely with our community."

"That's worked very well for us and it's an important part of the way we operate."

Town council leader Kieron Mallon said: "This council has proven yet again it can be trusted with taxpayers' money."

"With charities being called on to help in more and more aspects of public life, our increased grants will benefit a greater number of people in need of assistance."

SCHOOL DEPARTMENTS CHIPPING IN FOR TRIP TO OZ

PUPILS at Sibford School will follow the yellow brick road when they present *The Wizard of Oz* next week.

The musical – which tells the story of Dorothy's adventures getting back to Kansas after being swept up by a twister – will run from

February 9 to 11.

As well as involving drama and music departments, the scenery is being made by the art department and costumes by textiles.

Tickets cost £5 from the school on 01295 781200 or at sibfordschool.co.uk

Cash grant to relieve isolation of elderly people

OLDER people in Banbury will be given help to tackle loneliness and isolation after a £17,500 grant was provided by the People's Postcode Lottery.

The money will go towards the Banbury Good Neighbours service, run by the Royal Voluntary Service, which pairs volunteers with older people in their local area.

As part of the service,

volunteers help with basic tasks such as shopping, giving lifts to doctors appointments or social events, as well as sitting down for a friendly chat.

The Royal Voluntary Service Oxfordshire operations manager, Abigail Hurrell, said: "Many people in Banbury are isolated and lonely and are finding it difficult coping on their own, but we can provide a

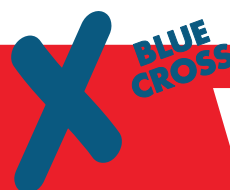
lifeline and support where friends or family are unable to.

"Whether it's a cup of tea and a chat or a lift to the shops, we can tailor the support to the needs of the older person."

The Good Neighbours service currently helps about 100 older people in Banbury, but organisers hope the extra funding will mean they can double this number.

The People's Postcode Lottery head of charities, Clara Govier, said: "For nearly 80 years RVS has been providing incredible support for many vulnerable older people across Great Britain."

"We are delighted that as a result of funding from players of People's Postcode Lottery, this fantastic charity will be able to continue to change the lives of older people for the better."



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Free Parking at the store

Scouts receive a £250 grant for vital storage

NORTH Oxon's Scouts can reap the benefits of a £250 grant from the Midcounties Co-operative to help buy garage stocking for camping and outdoor equipment.

North Banbury Scout Group, which works with children aged between six and 14, received the money after applying to the group's community fund.

Funds are awarded to organisations and charities which work within the company's trading areas.

Scout leader Cheryl Tree said: "The funds from the group will help us to store

our outdoor equipment so that it is in the best possible condition when we take our young Cubs, Beavers and Scouts on their next outdoor adventure."

The scout group, based at Mollington Village Hall and Hanwell Fields Community Centre, helps local children develop their survival skills through outdoor activities.

Stuart Newman, from the Banbury Co-op branch, said: "We're proud to lend a helping hand to the North Banbury Scout Group to help them continue to provide these experiences."

Charity's park run for little legs

A NEW monthly set of children's running events is launching this month.

Run by national children's charity Kids Run Free, they will cater for children aged up to 16 and cover distances from 50m to 5km.

The runs will be free to take part, and will be held on the first Sunday of each month in Spiceball Park.

The first will be held this Sunday at 10am. Warm-up and registration takes place from 9.45am.



Ben Lally, inset with his national awards, is already one of the best young dancers in Banbury

Pictures: Denis Kennedy

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By Arrangement with Solo

Dancing his way towards stardom

Young dancer has taken his skills on to the stage in a national competition

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

HE'S been dubbed the "Banbury Billy Eliot".

And it seems the fictional ballet dancer has proved an inspiration for young Ben Lally, who has been attracting attention of his own with his twinkle-feet talents.

Two years after first taking up dancing at Dashwood Banbury Academy primary school, the 11-year-old has been taking his skills on to the national stage.

Last month he competed in the Champions of Tomorrow in Blackpool, a competition featuring some of the best dancing talent from around the country.

Ben said: "I was thinking that I wanted to try a new sport that I enjoyed, and in the end I chose dancing."

"My school started to do classes in it, and because I was quite active I decided to give it a go."

"My favourite thing about dancing is going to all different competitions and winning trophies."

The Banbury Academy pupil trains three days a week, and five hours in total, at the Step by Step dance school based in Northamptonshire.

It is a busy schedule for a boy, who, unlike the Jamie Bell character, also spends his time playing football and rugby.

His mother Hayley Lally said: "He's been such a natural dancer, he picks everything up amazingly quickly and you can see the dancing he produces."

"He is so active, from the min-



Eleven-year-old Ben Lally with his supportive mum Hayley

ute he wakes up in the morning he has so much energy so I'm not surprised he's done well."

For the competition at Blackpool's Winter Gardens he was joined by his partner, 12-year-old Shannon Wigram, after the pair started dancing together for the last year.

They qualified after coming in the top two in a competition in Sutton-in-Ashfield in Nottinghamshire before Christmas.

But although in Blackpool the pair were eventually knocked out in the quarter finals of their samba and cha cha category, Ben is now hoping to take part in more competitions and take his talent further.

And as for the money Ms La-

lly has had to pay to see her son achieve his ambitions, she says it is a price she is willing to pay.

"As you can imagine this is an expensive hobby but it is worth every penny to see them enjoy themselves."

"The level of competition was so high, I was shocked at the level of dancing that there was but I'm sure Ben will have gained lots from it."

"He's got lots of support and works so hard, he knows that to be the best you have to beat the best."

"We are very grateful for all the support we've received from the Banbury Academy staff as well, who have helped him pursue his dancing career."



Eight-year-old Sabre Supple, who dressed as Henry VIII, had the assistance of eight-year-old David Tenovici, dressed as an executioner, to do his royal bidding during the visit to Sulgrave Manor

Picture: Jon Lewis

Youngsters get a taste of life in the olden days

EXECUTIONERS and 16th-century royalty were the inspiration for these ye-olde schoolboys.

Henry VIII mini-mes bedecked themselves with ruffles and headdresses before setting off on a trip to Sulgrave Manor, near Banbury.

Year Four pupils at Magdalen College Junior School in Cowley Place, Oxford, wore the outfits all day during their historic trip.

Sabre Supple, eight, who dressed as King Henry VIII, said: "I just wanted to be royal, and my mum just happened to have this costume which she had made. I quite like it that people have been addressing me as 'Your Majesty' and I'll probably have someone's head chopped off later on."



Eight-year-old David Tenovici dressed as the executioner.

The boys toured the Tudor manor and found out how the previous owners lived centuries ago.

They learnt olden-day dances, songs and enjoyed typical games of the era like 'Put and Take' and

'Game of the Goose.'

Year Four form tutor Jill Wade said: "The pupils are studying the Tudors this term and we wanted to immerse them in a Tudor environment. They have loved dressing up and the staff at the manor made it an exciting experience from the moment they arrive."

Volunteer to help diabetes charity

Branch launches appeal to find more helpers to provide support and awareness

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

VOLUNTEERS are needed in Banbury to help raise awareness of the impact of diabetes.

Diabetes UK, which is launching a branch in the town, is looking for people who want to help improve the lives of diabetes sufferers and hold meetings for people to discuss their experiences.

The role is flexible and also includes providing support, campaigning to improve local diabetes services, fundraising

for research and planning social events.

Michaela Wragg, Diabetes UK volunteer development manager for the south east, said: "Diabetes is one of the biggest health challenges facing the UK today and can lead to serious health complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness and amputation if not diagnosed soon enough or managed effectively."

"It's vital we do all we can to raise awareness of the seriousness of diabetes and this is why our volunteers are so important."

According to the charity there

are 28,000 people diagnosed with diabetes in Oxfordshire, and an estimated 10,700 people who are unaware they have the Type 2 condition.

Ms Wragg added: "Our volunteers are at the heart of our work and without their support Diabetes UK could not carry out its vital work into research, education and care."

"That's why we're calling on people across Banbury to join our new support group and help ensure our messages are heard as widely as possible."

For more information call 01372 731363 or email south.east@diabetes.org.uk.

Appeal for volunteer drivers to be community 'superheroes'

VOLUNTEER drivers are needed to become "real life superheroes" and give lifts to people in their area by Oxfordshire County Council.

Communities across the county are asked to set up their own locally-led transport schemes to keep up with an ageing population.

At present there are more than 60 such schemes in Oxfordshire, with about 1,300 local volunteers who give up time to help others get around.

The council, which has teamed up with charity Community First Oxfordshire to launch the scheme, estimates that 25,000 lifts are offered each year to those who may not have easy access to transport.



Paul Roberts and Ian Adshead of Aspire launch its Dial-a-Ride work

Councillor Rodney Rose, deputy leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said: "Passengers describe community transport volunteers as a fantastic support, which is why we are appealing for more of these local superheroes to come forward."

"It is clear that giving up a small amount of time can make a really positive difference to individuals within a community."

"Community transport schemes have for many years been supporting those who, due to age or disability, may find it difficult to get around."

In December, the new Dial-a-Ride service, run by charity Aspire on behalf of the council, celebrated its 3,500th passenger but does not reach all areas of Oxfordshire.

Volunteers generally use their cars, are paid a mileage rate and can choose the time they give. Others can set up scheme-owned minibuses. For details call 01865 883488 or visit oxfordshire.gov.uk/volunteerdriver

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Watchdog's concern over cuts in health

A HEALTH watchdog has slammed proposed cuts to healthcare services and put itself forward to deal with the fallout.

One director at Healthwatch Oxfordshire – which oversees healthcare in the county – called Oxfordshire County Council's proposals "draconian".

George Smith said: "Clearly an enormous amount of pain is going to be inflicted on people over the next year. The county council made a draconian decision and clearly we need to assess whether there is excessive and unnecessary pain."

He spoke at a Healthwatch meeting last week, at Long Furlong Community Centre in Abingdon.

Oxfordshire County Council is set to cut services across the county, in a bid to save an extra £69 million from 2016-20, on top of the £292m of cuts it must make from 2010-2018.

Included in the proposals is the closure of all 44 children's centres in Oxfordshire, although the final rubber-stamp won't come until a county council meeting on February 16.

Mr Smith suggested Healthwatch Oxfordshire should monitor the effects of the cuts.

He said: "To what extent should we present ourselves as being the focal point of collecting the effects of these cuts? Different organisations can feed in information."

The organisation's chairman Eddie Duller agreed.

He said: "I feel very strongly that Healthwatch should be more proactive than it has been. There is such tremendous change going on. We want to be in there with greater presence to save some of the pain George is talking about."

Tracey Rees, vice chair of the board, said cuts to other services could have a domino effect on their own, adding: "I share the concern that we are likely to end up with more work with the situation with cuts elsewhere."

Healthwatch, funded largely by the council, is set to have its own budget hacked by one third.

During the meeting, board directors agreed to make "one more last ditch attempt" to argue against the slashing, which will see it £100,000 poorer.

Ian Hudspeth, leader of the county council, said: "It should be remembered that this is now our sixth consecutive year of having to make cuts."

"Our priority is services for the most vulnerable."

New wildlife trust chief's goal for natural harmony

President urges UK to look abroad for ideas on creating ecosystem balance in cities

Pete Hughes
phughes@nqo.com

IMAGINE walking through a forest to go shopping on Oxford High Street, hopping across wetlands to get to work in the morning, and feeding the wild boar on the way.

That is the vision of the new president of the UK's national Wildlife Trusts, who was born and raised in Oxford.

Tony Juniper, who grew up in Cowley, envisions a time when none is more than a stone's throw from a wild space where they can go walking.

Not only could creating more joined-up wild habitats help wildlife be more resilient to climate change, he says it could also help reduce flooding.

Mr Juniper even says encouraging people to go for more walks in the woods could also create a healthier population and save the NHS millions.

The new president of 47 UK wildlife trusts, who started his career with the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) in the mid-80s, is calling on local and national government to be more ambitious in protecting the natural world.

He told the *Banbury Cake*: "Oxfordshire isn't bad, but I don't think it's exceptional."

"Being in the South East there is a lot of pressure to develop housing, and in the face of that I think Oxford's doing pretty well."

But he added: "There are things we might learn from other countries around the world."

"Oslo and Bergen have forests right into the city and people are encouraged to use it more; in Berlin they have wild boar coming into the city centre."

"Things like that can go hand in hand with economic regeneration."

"Reestablishing natural areas within city boundaries is bringing all sorts of benefits for children, air and water quality, reduced flood risk and health benefits from working in natural areas."

"If you start to crunch the numbers you find it's a very sound investment."



Wildlife trusts are...

The 47 Wildlife Trusts in the UK:

- Bring 392,000 people a year closer to nature through nature reserves or through outreach visits to schools, community groups and care homes
- Care for 98,000 hectares of land and 370km of river across 2,300 individual nature reserves
- Advise on the management of a further 159,000 hectares of land and 3,100km of river
- Are supported by more than 800,000 members and 43,000 volunteers

Tony Juniper, inset, grew up in Oxford and would like to bring the rural world closer to all the nation's inhabitants

In 2014, the Institute of Health Equality published a report funded by Natural England which showed evidence that green spaces could benefit health.

Researchers found that older people lived longer in areas where there was more green space close to their homes and children who lived close to green spaces had higher levels of physical activity and were less likely to get fat.

A report released by the British Heart Foundation showed that 29 per cent of Year Six primary school children in Oxfordshire were overweight or obese in the 2014-15 school year.

Mr Juniper, who took up his role as president in December, said there was an inherent problem that wild spaces were seen as a "luxury".

He said: "Natural areas are seen as an expensive luxury rather than

being a sound investment.

"One thing we can see for sure is that there are big benefits of being able to get into natural areas and be with wildlife."

"The current government, in its election manifesto, promised to lay the foundations for the restoration of nature in a generation."

"That is a bold and welcome goal and I'm looking forward to helping turn it into action."

Council expects another rush to sign up for half-term break craft and sport events

YOUNGSTERS are being invited to book in for arts and crafts, games and sports at the Cherwell District Council holiday hubs.

Over the half-term break, the council will host its holiday clubs in Bicester and Banbury for children while off school.

The sessions will run from Monday, February 15, to Friday, February 19.

Activities on offer include daily arts and crafts and different sports events

throughout the week.

The Cherwell District Council deputy leader, George Reynolds, said: "It may seem like the children have only just gone back to school after Christmas, but another half-term is already on the horizon and we have been busy preparing for it."

"In recent years, demand for our hubs programme has continued to grow."

"In October, we sold out the activities in Bicester for the first time, which

demonstrates just how popular they have become."

"The booking lines have now opened for the February hubs and, with less than a month to go, we are expecting places to fill up quickly."

The sessions are for children aged between five and 15 and will run from 8.45am to 3pm, or for a full-day session up to 5pm.

Costs are £17.95 per child and places can be booked on 01295 221803.

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Sci-fi characters delight public at first 'geek' day

Star Wars' stormtroopers sign autographs and pose for pictures with town fans

Megan Archer
marcher@nqo.com

SHOPPERS were stunned to come face-to-face with Chewbacca on Saturday as Banbury's first Geek Con hurtled into town.

For one day Castle Quay shopping centre was invaded by zombies, stormtroopers and other mysterious characters, but instead of attacking sci-fi fans, they delighted visitors by doing guest signings and posing for photographs.

The Comic Con-style event featured special appearances from five of the *Star Wars* bounty hunters, in their original costumes, as well as *Red Dwarf* actress Hattie Hayridge and *Mad Max* star Virginia Hey.

Event organiser and creative director Suzette Neptune, a self-confessed sci-fi fanatic, said: "It's been an overwhelmingly positive response – the audience and guests were all asking when the next one is."



From left, Simon Plant, Stig Sturgeon, Len Harrington and Judge Drone at Castle Quay on Saturday to collect money for the Dogs Trust during Banbury's first Geek Con, which featured special guests including bounty hunters from *Star Wars*, and other dressed-up characters

"The highlight for me was seeing the surprise and excitement on people's faces."

"You could see their eyes following the stormtroopers. Everybody was impressed with the

spectacle." This is the first time the free event, organised by Banbury Presents, has come to the town."

Picture: Kirsty Edmonds

Squat jumps for youth challenge

THE FIRST fitness challenge of the new year has been set to get youngsters fit.

Every month Cherwell District Council sets a 30-second fitness challenge to get kids active and this time it involves squat jumps.

Children are invited to try and beat the 'activator' Edward Frape who scored 22 squat jumps in the time given.

Cherwell District Council deputy leader George Reynolds, pictured, said: "We have a new challenge for youngsters. This month the activators have chosen squat jumps and are challenging children across the district to try and beat their score of 22."

They have been set for youngsters aged between eight and 16 years old. To enter see cherwell.gov.uk/youngpeople



Councillor George Reynolds

Spate of burglaries

A SPATE of six burglaries were reported in residential roads around Banbury over one weekend. On Friday, January 22, between 7pm to 9pm two incidents were reported in Larksfield Road and one in Easington Road between 4.30pm and 9pm.

Overnight between the Saturday and Sunday thieves also targeted a house in Hereford Way and stole a laptop, tyres and machinery from a property in Thorpe Way. Next day burglars broke into a house in Wykham Place. Anyone with information can contact police on 101.

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Events

FRIDAY

Abingdon Farmers' Market: Market Place. Produce, locally sourced. 8.30am. 01235 227266.

SATURDAY

Bicester & Kidlington Ramblers: SP698271, near Fountain Inn, Steeple Claydon. Moderate 7-mile circular walk to King's Bridge, Lenborough Farm and Hillesden Church led by Richard Savory. 10am. 07967 370206.

SUNDAY

Bird Bonanza!: Earth Trust, Little Wittenham. Drop into the Earth Trust Centre and get to know our feathered friends. Make a bird feeder, try 'twitching' and build a nest. £4 suggested donation per child, accompanying adults free. earthtrust.org.uk/whatson. 10am. 01865 407792.

Ramblers walk: The Church, Turville, Buckinghamshire, 6-mile walk to Fingest for a picnic in St Bartholomew's Church, which has been decorated for Candlemas. Hot drinks and cakes. 10am. 01844 213608.

Walk (Fieldpaths): Caulcott, lay-by opposite Horse and Groom on B4030, SP506244, for 6-mile scenic walk taking in Upper and Lower Heyford. Bring a snack for coffee stop. Pub at end. Assistance dogs only. 10am. 01865 373366.

MONDAY

Mr Hemmings Traditional Morris Men: Royal British Legion, Spring Road Abingdon. Practice every Monday at 8pm. Looking for new dancers. Free.

Morris Winter Practice: Recreation Hall, Main Street, Long Hanborough. Masons Apron Northwest welcomes new and experienced dancers to join. Men and women musicians also welcome. 8.15pm. 01993 200717.

TUESDAY

Bicester & Kidlington Ramblers: SP608261, Church, Stratton Audley. A leisurely, circular 4-mile walk in the area led by Mary Gough. 10am. 07939 826412.

Ramblers walk: Highfield Close, Thame. Leisurely, 4-mile walk to Moreton and Cuttle Brook nature reserve with a coffee stop at end. 10am. 01844 213608.

WEDNESDAY

Walk (Fieldpaths): Village Green, Marsh Baldon. 10am, meeting at SU563993, for a 5-mile walk. Please park carefully, away from the school. A circular walk using footpaths and bridleways to Little Baldon and Chislehampton. Bring refreshments for en route break. Assistance dogs only. 01865 246458.

Comedy

THURSDAY

Comedy Club: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. Jonny Awsum, musical comedy. Meryl O'Rourke with trademark bitterness and dysfunctionality. Tom Ward's style incorporates his voice-over talents, improvisation and innovative writing. Compered by Craig Murray, face of Plusnet adverts. Age guide 18+. 8pm.

£12.50, £11 (concs). 01235 515144.

SATURDAY

Austenacious: Improved Jane Austen novel. Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. A comedy play spun out from audience suggestions. Be it *Mansfield Shark* or *Darcy & Hutch*, no two shows are the same. 7.30pm. £15, £13.50 (concs). 01235 515144.

SUNDAY

Comedy Club for Kids (ages 6+ and families): Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. Some of the best comedians from the UK circuit ... without the rude bits. 2pm. £8.50, £6.50 (concs). 01235 515144.

MONDAY

The Oxford Imps: The Wheatsheaf, High Street, Oxford. Performing every Monday a show based on audience suggestions. Tickets facebook.com/oxfordimps. 8pm. £3.50.

Music

THURSDAY

Crown Imperial: Harris Manchester College, Mansfield Road, Oxford. Festive music to celebrate the 64th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II. Works by Handel, Ives, Walton & Widor. Myles Hartley. Organ. 1.30pm. Free, with retiring collection. 01865 271006.

Lunchtime Concert: Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford. Free. Musical styles vary from week to week. See wesleymem.org.uk. 12.45pm. 01865 243216.

Sean Taylor: Old Fire Station, George Street, Oxford. Roots and blues. Presented by Glovebox. Tickets from ticketsoxford.com or 01865 305305. 8:15pm. £12 in advance, £14 on door.

Choir Rehearsal: St Francis Primary School, Horspath Road, Cowley. Join the Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir. No experience needed. Rehearsals every Thursday, 7.30 to 9.30pm. See oxfordwelshmvc.org.uk. £70 a year. 01235 203929.

FRIDAY

Jason Pegg: General Foods S&S Club, Spiceball Park, Banbury. Covers from the Beatles to The Jam and Snow Patrol. 8.30pm. 01295 252852.

John Spiers: The White House, Abingdon Road, Oxford. Oxford Folk Club. 8.30pm. £6. 01865 768128.

Kev G: Berinsfield SC, Green Furlong, Berinsfield. Covers from past 60 years. 9pm. 07770 899859.

Luke Daniels: *Revolve and Rotate*, Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. BBC award-winning musician, Riverdance band member and soloist on the *Lord of the Rings* and *Hobbit* soundtracks. Suite of six new 100-second pieces. 8pm. £15, £13.50 (concs). 01235 515144.

The Summits: The Angel, Market Square, Witney. Male duo with covers. Free. 9pm. 01993 703238.

Villiers Quartet with A Portrait of a Friendship: Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, Oxford. Mendelssohn String Quartet op. 13, William Sterndale Bennett String Quartet in G, Brahms FAE Sonata, Schumann String Quartet no. 3. 7.30pm. £15 (£5). 01865 244806.

SATURDAY

Backin 4: Beehive, Black Bourton Road,

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Carterton. Covers band. Free. 9.30pm. 01993 840813.

Corona Strings, English string classics: Elgar, Britten and Ireland at St John the Evangelist Church, Ilfley Road, Oxford. Soprano Erica Eloff and Corona Strings, conducted by Janet Lincé. 7.30pm. £16, £12, £5. 01865 305305.

Decades: Cowley Workers SC, Between Towns Road. Rock, pop and glam duo. 9pm. 01865 772970.

Eglesfield Musical Society Saturday Recital Series: The Queen's College, Shulman Auditorium, High Street, Oxford. Joe Davies, George Needham, Elizabeth Nurse, 1.30pm. Free with a retiring collection. 01865 279120.

Fergus Elliott: Swan Inn, Shipton Road, Ascott-under-Wychwood. Support from Troubsht & Turnipseed. £6 in advance, £8 on door. 01993 831427 or wegottickets.com/wychwoodfolkclub

Ilfley Music Society Concert: Ilfley Church Hall, Church Way, Oxford. Riyad Nicolas (piano). Bach: *Prelude and Fugue Book 2* No. 1; Beethoven: *Sonata* op 110; Chopin: *Polonaise Fantasy* op 61; Mazurka op 24; Scarlatti: *Sonatas* K466, K455; Ravel: *Gaspard de la nuit*, Liszt: *Consolation* no. 3; Paganini *Etude* no. 6. 7.30pm. Adults £10. Children 8-18 £5. 01865 779663.

Jazz Brunch with Nick Gill: West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road, Oxford. An Audience with Willie 'The Lion' Smith, now a mere 122 years old, hear the living legend recount the early days of jazz, with all the icons of the genre. For some years now, Willie has been playing under the pseudonym of Nick Gill. Tickets from goldengiving.com/event/jazzbrunch1. 11am. £6.50 / £5.00 concessions. 01865 254761.

Joe Holic: Marston BL, Hadow Road, Marston. Covers. 9pm. 01865 243991.

Organ Recital: Raise the Roof, St Mary's Church, Church Green, Witney. Music by Bach, Vaughan Williams, Howells, Barber played on new Viscount organ by Dr Francis Rumsey. Bar. 7.30pm. Free, retiring collection for roof campaign. 01993 705189.

Oxford Orpheus Verdi Requiem: Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford. Tenth annual charity concert, supporting Headway Oxfordshire. 7.30pm. £10/£7.50 concessions/£5 students. 01856 250440.

Pete Fryer Band: Cricketers Cowley, Temple Road, Cowley. Covers. Free. 9pm. 01865 718459.

The Summits: Oxford C&C Bowles Club, Marston Ferry Road, Marston. Covers duo. 8.30pm. 01865 554334.

SUNDAY

Abbey Chamber Concerts: St Nicolas Church, Market Place, Abingdon. Maki Sekiya piano, Beethoven Waldstein sonata. 3pm. £10 (£9). 07775 904626.

Oxford Studio Orchestra: Olivier Bonnici (violin) and Jacqueline Johnson (cello), St Michael and All Angels Church, Lonsdale Road, Summertown, Oxford. Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann. 3.30pm. £8 (£6 concessions). Children free. 01865 558626.

Cushion Concert – Tuba: Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, St Hilda's College, Cowley Place, Oxford. Rozzy & Mr Cello introduce the workings and music of the tuba to families. Bring a cushion. 10am and 11am for under-5s, noon for over-5s.

ticketsoxford.com, 01865 305305. £5 or £16 for family of four.

Violin Recital: James Wicks, with Jennifer Carter (piano). All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay. Works by Elgar, Watkins and Vaughan Williams, Debussy. 4pm. £9. 07788 715873.

TUESDAY

Cornerstone's Open Mic Night: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. Second Tuesday of every month, 7.30pm. Open Mic night in the cafe-bar for musicians, poets, performance artists and storytellers. Ask in advance for a time slot, to create a smoother night. Call the box office on 01235 515144 or email Louise and Emma at cornerstoneopenmic@southoxon.gov.uk. 7.30pm. Free.

WEDNESDAY

Chilingirian Quartet: Amey Theatre, Abingdon School, Park Road. The world-renowned Chilingirian Quartet, 7pm. One of the most celebrated string ensembles on the international music scene, touring over 50 countries across six continents, playing classical and contemporary works. The quartet has won prizes including the Royal Philharmonic Society Chamber Music Award, the Cobbett Medal and was awarded the Best String Quartet Recording by *Gramophone Magazine*. To book, see abingdon.org.uk/future_events. 7pm. £14 (concessions £7), Family ticket £35. 01235 849063.

The Queen's College Organ Recital Series: The Queen's College Chapel, High Street, Oxford. Andrew Knowles (Oxford Oratory). Recital at 1.10pm. Free with a retiring collection. 01865 279125.

Theatre

THURSDAY

Flare Path: Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford. Set during the Second World War, Terrence Rattigan's play draws inspiration from the Britain around him, both on the Home Front and with the Royal Air Force. 2.30pm & 7.30pm. £11.50 to £27. 01865 305305.

FRIDAY

BusyBody, a comedy whodunnit!: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway. Drayton Players. A mystery with lots of motives, by Jack Popplewell, with songs. Shows on February 5/6, and 12/13, 7.30pm. Tickets from Vickery's store or on 01235 200350. 7.30pm. £8. 01235 200350.

Flare Path: Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford. Set during the Second World War, Terrence Rattigan's play draws inspiration from the Britain around him, both on the Home Front and with the Royal Air Force. 8pm. £11.50 to £27. 01865 305305.

SATURDAY

Happily Ever After...?: Faringdon Junior School, The Elms, Gloucester Street, Faringdon. New pantomime written by Helen Thrower and Verity Roberts, members of the society. Did Cinderella and Prince Charming live happily ever after? Saturday matinée,

2.30pm. faringdondramatic.org.uk. £8 adults, juniors £6.

BusyBody, a comedy whodunnit!: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway. Drayton Players. A mystery with lots of motives, by Jack Popplewell, with songs. Shows on February 5/6, and 12/13, 7.30pm. Tickets from Vickery's store or on 01235 200350. 7.30pm. £8. 01235 200350.

Transports: Old Fire Station, George Street, Oxford. A volatile 15-year-old is shunted to another – possibly final – foster home. Her foster mother is an eccentric chatterbox who keeps her Kindertransport past hidden in a trunk. Pipeline Theatre production jumps in time between the 70s and the Second World War. £12 & £10, ticketsoxford.com or 01865 305305. 7.30am. £12, £10.

Flare Path: Oxford Playhouse. See Thursday.

TUESDAY

Hammer and Tongue: Old Fire Station, George Street, Oxford. Performances sandwiched by acclaimed feature artists, such as Simon Munnelly, John Hegley, Elvis McGonagall, Luke Wright, and Kate Tempest. Open Poetry Slam, when poets get three minutes to dazzle the audience. Sign up on the door (free entry for slammers). Tickets ticketsoxford.com or 01865 305305. 8pm. £7, £5. 01865 305305.

Land of Our Fathers: North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown, Oxford. Presented by Theatre503, Tara Finney Productions and Wales Millennium Centre. It's 1979, South Wales. Mrs Thatcher is counting her votes, Sid Vicious is spinning in his grave and six Welsh miners are trapped down a coal mine. Call 01865 319450 or see thenorthwall.com

Turning Leaves: Old Fire Station, George Street, Oxford. Looking at crime and the treatment of criminals. Is justice free from the assumptions of gender and class? Three stark, powerful solo performances in a discussion of social perception and analysis of crime and risk: *Trees Grow High*, written and directed by Eleanor Conlon and performed by Jessica Blake, a response to media controversies about female perpetrators of sex crimes; *Oh Danny Boy*, written by Jaime Woodham, directed by John Retallack, performed by Steve Hay, is a dark reflection on society's responsibility to its outcasts; *Turning Leaves*, written and directed by Eleanor Conlon and performed by Glen Kinch, is a discussion of the establishment's attitudes to crime and impartiality. Tickets, priced £10 (£6 concessions) from ticketsoxford.com or 01865 305305. 8pm.

Dance

THURSDAY

Rhythm and Dance: Rugrats and Halfpints, Beaumont Road, Banbury. Dance class every Thursday, 10.30am to 11.15am, run by Come to My Party. Suitable for participants from a young age. See rugratsandhalfpints.com. Free dancing session with standard entry price for the play centre. 01295 250060.

Witney Folk Dance Group: Madley Park Hall, Northfield Farm Lane. Learn English Country Dances. 8pm. £3. 01993 705961.

TUESDAY

Tea Dance: Woodstock Social Club, Oxford Street, Woodstock. Enjoy a dance or just a chat with friendly crowd. Entrance price includes tea/coffee & cake. 2pm. £2. 01993 812094.

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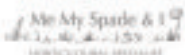
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Rich portrait of suspicion

TRUMBO (15, 124 mins) Drama/Romance. Bryan Cranston, Diane Lane, Helen Mirren, Elle Fanning, Louis CK, Alan Tudyk, Roger Bart, John Goodman, Stephen Root, Dean O'Gorman, Mattie Liptak, Becca Nicole Preston. Director: Jay Roach

BACK in 1947, the great and the good of California were pitted against each other during a perceived threat from Communists, who might use the big screen to spread their propaganda.

Membership of the Communist Party was not illegal, but various figures behind and in front of the camera were called before the House Un-American Activities Committee to testify about their political affiliations and to name and shame Communist sympathisers.

A group of screenwriters, producers and directors were so incensed by this challenge to their First Amendment right to freedom of thought and speech, that they refused to give direct answers to the committee.

These so-called rebels became the Hollywood Ten and were blacklisted by the studios for more than a decade.

Among them was Dalton Trumbo, who secretly penned Oscar-winning scripts for *Roman Holiday* and *The Brave One* during his exile.

Jay Roach's handsome period drama, based on the biography by Bruce Cook, relives this inglorious period of paranoia and suspicion.

Trumbo (Bryan Cranston) enjoys a charmed life with wife Cleo (Diane Lane) and their three children until waspish columnist Hedda Hopper (Helen Mirren) casts aspersions on his political leanings.

Actor John Wayne (David James Elliott), elected president of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, weighs in on the argument and Trumbo is held in contempt by Congress.



While some people sever ties to protect their careers, low-budget filmmakers Frank (John Goodman) and Hymie King (Stephen Root) happily employ the venerated writer to polish their B-movies.

Leading man Kirk Douglas (Dean O'Gorman) also uses his influence to secure the writer a seat at the *Spartacus* table.

Distinguished by an Oscar-nominated performance from Cranston, *Trumbo* is a fascinating portrait of a time when suspicion could end a promising career.

Mirren savours every bile-drenched line of her finely dressed antagonist in sharp contrast to Lane's warm portrayal of a supportive, self-sacrificing wife.

John McNamara's elegant script glitters with snappy one-liners.

GOOSEBUMPS (PG, 103 mins) A family horror comedy with Jack Black. Director: Rob Letterman

COMIC whirlwind Jack Black ramps up his manic energy to gale force 10 in this fast-paced fantasy based on the children's books by RL Stine.

Directed with brio by Rob Letterman, *Goosebumps* is a wicked delight, packed full of spooks and scares that should see adults and little ones jump.

A lean script barely pauses for breath between set pieces, but still finds time to flesh out a compelling teenage love story.

Gale (Amy Ryan) arrives in Delaware with teenage son Zach to become vice-principal at Madison High School.

Their new neighbour is the mysterious Mr Shivers (Black).

As a result of the teenager's curiosity about the man next door, monsters get released into the real world.

Helen Mirren and Bryan Cranston in *Trumbo*, which is based on Hollywood's 1950s Communist witch hunt

Limp and predictable

DAD'S ARMY (PG, 100 mins) A war comedy with Toby Jones, Bill Nighy, Tom Courtenay, Bill Paterson, Blake Harrison, Daniel Mays, Michael Gambon and Catherine Zeta-Jones. Director: Oliver Parker

HOW do you improve on the perfection of Jimmy Perry and David Croft's sitcom?

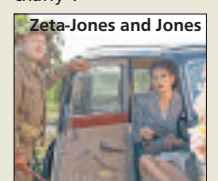
You don't. If you're director Oliver Parker and screenwriter Hamish McColl, you pepper a flimsy plot with the catchphrases and pray our abiding affection for the characters will compensate for long passages without a discernible punchline.

Limp, innuendo-laden banter barely merits a smirk, pratfalls are predictable and a terrific cast of gifted

comic actors go on patrol without an arsenal of decent one-liners.

It is 1944 and the war is on a knife edge. In Walmington-on-Sea, blustering bank manager George Mainwaring (Toby Jones) proudly leads the local Home Guard.

Their fate hangs in the balance when Colonel Theakes (Mark Gatiss) reveals that he intends to sort the military wheat from the chaff and "Walmington feels chaffy".



Cake Bookworm

The Noise Of Time by Julian Barnes, hardback by Jonathan Cape, £14.99 (ebook £9.99)

THIS is the first novel from Barnes since he won the Man Booker Prize in 2011 for *The Sense Of An Ending*. It is essentially a novelisation of the life of the Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich, doomed to live and work under Stalin and his successors, first in fear for his life and then in guilty shame at the enforced compromises that have secured not just his survival, but his canonisation by a regime he despises.

Shostakovich is a weak, cowardly man in a period when personal courage counts for nothing. In seeking to avoid denunciation or execution and spare his loved ones, his only defences are evasion, irony and the double-edged gift of his extraordinary musical ability. This focuses on three critical moments in his career. In the first, an opera of his is damned in a *Pravda* editorial,

virtually a death threat in itself. Next, the composer – back in Stalin's favour – is on a propaganda tour of the US, robotically delivering a ghosted speech in which he must denounce his own work and that of Stravinsky. In the third, the ageing Shostakovich is a puppet celebrity wheeled out to sign articles, make more speeches and denounce his heroes. Barnes pulls together all the strands into a powerful study of the complexities of life under tyranny.

You And Me, Always by Jill Mansell, hardback by Headline Review, £16.99 (ebook £8.49)

A HEAVYWEIGHT of the chick-lit world, Mansell's latest work provides another dose of heart-warming plots and relatable characters. Lily, the heroine, hasn't had a perfect life. Her mother died when she was a child and her father wants nothing to do with her. When a famous actor arrives in the

village, everyone's world is shaken up. This is an uplifting, easy read, to brighten the winter months.

Zoo Boy by Sophie Thompson (illustrated by Rebecca Ashdown), paperback by Faber & Faber, £5.99 (ebook £3.98)

ACTRESS, Celebrity MasterChef winner and Emma Thompson's little sister, Sophie, has written a zany and charming debut for young readers. Birthday boy Vince has just turned eight. He loves everything orange, but does not like animals, even though his dad's a zookeeper. His mum's run off to the circus with a lion tamer. Vince is left with his flamboyant gran. Now he's eight, it's time for Vince to start helping his dad at the zoo, just as his dad helped Grandpa Jacko. But a penguin in a waistcoat talks to him. Then a badger and a menagerie of other creatures. Vince has inherited his Grandpa's ability to talk to animals. A delight.

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It's ton-up Banbury

BANBURY'S rugby team produced a devastating display to win 105-8 at home to Droitwich.

The Bulls ran in 17 tries to maintain their position at the top of the Midlands 2 West South table in emphatic style.

Banbury had secured the bonus point inside 15 minutes with tries from Joe Mills, Ed Phillips, Jimmy Manley and Jed Boyle.

Phillips converted one and Mills two, but some poor defensive play did allow Droitwich a try and penalty.

However, it was soon business as usual with six further tries for the hosts before half-time through Sean Bannister (2), Josh Deegan, Adam Walsh, Matt Goode and Jimmy Manley.

Despite having passed the half-century barrier, Banbury were determined not to ease off.

Further tries from Sam Stoop, Deegan and Walsh kept the scoreboard ticking over.

The move of the game saw Walsh go over to complete his hat-trick, before Manley also crossed for his third try.

Stoop and Goode went over again, and with seven successful kicks from Mills, Banbury sealed a huge win.

LATEST TABLE

Midlands 2 West (South)									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Banbury	15	13	0	2	628	188	66		
Earlsdon	15	13	0	2	428	117	62		
Spartan	15	10	0	5	427	182	51		
Pinley	14	10	1	3	245	166	45		
Berkswell & B	14	8	0	6	322	211	41		
Nuneaton OE	15	7	0	8	296	291	36		
Barkers Butts	15	7	1	7	317	332	35		
Malvern	14	6	1	7	326	279	34		
Dunlop	15	6	0	9	222	360	29		
Leamington	15	4	1	10	207	383	23		
Droitwich	15	1	1	13	161	560	4		
Bedworth	14	0	1	13	196	706	-1		



Josh Deegan (left) kept the scoreboard ticking over

Browne's brace pushes Puritans up to third place

TWO goals from Darius Browne gave Banbury United a 2-0 victory at Wimborne on Saturday as they moved up to third in Division 1 South & West of the Evo-Stik Southern League.

After Ricky Johnson had headed just over and Mark Bell fired a shot against a post, Banbury took the lead in the 34th minute.

Bell's cross was nodded down by Johnson to Browne, who knocked the ball home from six yards.

Banbury's second goal arrived in the 61st minute when Felipe Barcelos took a quick throw-in to Bell.

He crossed low to Browne who back-heeled the ball over the line.

Last week's midweek league game at Taunton Town was abandoned due

to a waterlogged pitch. Banbury Utd: Harding, White, Welch-Hayes, Nash, Westbrook, Gunn, Bell (Davies 85), Stanbridge (Martin 77), Johnson, Barcelos (Howards 77), Browne. Subs not used: Wise, Steedman. Attendance: 331.

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE									
Division 1 South & West									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Cinderford Tn	24	18	4	2	49	14	58		
Taunton Tn	26	17	6	3	53	21	57		
Banbury Utd	27	15	9	3	68	28	54		
Supermarine	25	16	4	5	47	25	52		
North Leigh	27	16	3	8	58	26	51		
Winchester C	24	15	4	5	60	33	49		
Tiverton Tn	26	13	9	4	45	29	48		
Evesham Utd	27	12	8	7	48	28	44		
Shortwood Utd	25	13	3	9	48	42	42		
Didcot Tn	27	12	5	10	53	45	41		
AFC Totton	29	11	4	14	56	57	37		
Bishops Cleeve	21	9	7	5	33	34	34		
Yate Tn	27	8	8	11	34	36	32		
Larkhall Ath	27	8	7	12	42	46	31		
Slimbridge	25	7	7	11	27	33	28		
Marlow	26	8	4	14	40	47	28		
Mangotsfield	26	7	7	12	37	48	28		
Wimborne Tn	28	8	3	17	50	62	27		
Bridgwater Tn	27	7	4	16	28	53	25		
Wantage Tn	27	6	2	19	33	64	20		
Burnham	27	4	4	19	29	62	16		
Bashley	24	0	0	24	9	116	0		

STARSwith Claire Petulengro

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ARIES

Mar 21-Apr 19

Try to make some time for you this week. I can see from your stars that you have been burning the candle at both ends, which has made it harder for you to make the important decisions which are before you this month. The return of a face from the past in your career makes your working week more enjoyable. Ring now for details.

LIBRA

Sep 23-Oct 22

The air of peace which you were enjoying has gone and has been replaced by a stressful influence whose selfish attitude is fast becoming a problem. New faces offer you the exit you need to make a better social life. Don't be guilt tripped into spending time with stressful people. Ring now so I can help you enjoy life to the full.

0906 585 4360

0906 585 4366

TAURUS

Apr 20-May 20

I can see that others have, and continue to, try your patience. Back away from those who have been dragging you down, this is your life to live. Taurus. The home looks set for a much more peaceful period as you and a close one are finally able to put a recent drama behind you. Ring now to hear how great your future can be.

SCORPIO

Oct 23-Nov 21

I know you were not feeling positive about your future, but from this week you get the proof you've needed that you are both loved and supported. Good news from the younger generation also proves what a good job you did of supporting those you love with their dreams. Ring now to hear how new career paths develop this month.

0906 585 4361

0906 585 4367

GEMINI

May 21-Jun 20

If you continue to try to help those who don't want to help themselves, you are only going to get dragged down into their despondent mood Gemini. Move on with your head held high. You've done more than enough to show support which was not appreciated. Ring now to hear how Uranus is about to make life interesting again.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22-Dec 21

There is a really passionate feel to your stars which could see you doing things which others will be shocked by. It is your life Sagittarius and as long as you are happy with the standards you are keeping then that is all that matters. Phone calls, texts and messages bring happy family news. Ring now to hear who can't stop thinking about you.

0906 585 4362

0906 585 4368

CANCER

Jun 21-Jul 22

An air of uncertainty in your stars is making you appear more nervous than you actually are. Close ones may begin to feel as if your heart is not really in any joint projects, but that's not the case is it? Use Friday's communicative aspects to talk to those involved. Ring now to hear why I know this is a union worth saving.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22-Jan 19

Emotions are making it hard for you to get a realistic view of life and you may be tempted to accuse close ones of things you have no proof of. Your element of earth is making you more needy than usual, which could explain your accusations. Calm comes with you saying yes to the downtime a loved one is offering. Ring now for insight.

0906 585 4363

0906 585 4369

LEO

Jul 23-Aug 22

There is an uneasy mood in your stars which is making you question things you usually have the utmost confidence in. Fellow Leos hold the key to the steam you need to blow off as they know what to say and do to relax you, so seek them out. Gemini bring an exciting work opportunity. Ring now so I can tell you more.

AQUARIUS

Jan 20-Feb 18

I'm really proud of the way you've grown and evolved as a person over the New Year. Aquarius. It's time this month to plan what you want to do with the year ahead. Don't rule out further education and study. It could well be the making of you my friend. Ring now to utilise the structure Saturn has to offer.

0906 585 4364

0906 585 4370

VIRGO

Aug 23-Sep 22

You have friends in high places now Virgo and it seems as if your hard work and determination at the beginning of this year was worth all the effort. Fun times link to a face from your past who you recently picked up with again. Flirtations turn serious from the weekend. Ring now to hear who is your star match.

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

Financial deals appear to be more tricky than usual for you and you may find yourself having to tell white lies in order to placate a difficult face you're dealing with. An emotional weekend could see you asking for more of a commitment than you want. Beware. Ring now so that I can give you a full reading on life and love.

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MADNESS

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Steeleye Span [HEADSPACE]

Wille & the Bandits • LIFESIGNS

Sound of the Sirens • BBC YFA Winner (tba)

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SATURDAY 13

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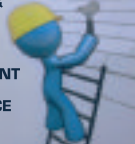
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In brief

- **DIESEL** power is set for a reunion with the new Fiat 500, following confirmation that the facelifted 2016 model will get the latest 1.3 Multijet 1194bhp engine. The unit is specially designed for small cars like the 500 and the Panda, which is the only other diesel city car on sale in the UK. It produces peak torque of 148lb/ft from just 1,500rpm, but musters most of that from a low 1,250rpm, thanks to a small, low-inertia turbocharger that spins up to speed sooner than larger equivalents. The 500 diesel has a top speed of 112mph, bypassing 62mph in 10.7 seconds. Claimed fuel economy is 83.1mpg. Prices start at £14,160.
- **AUDI** has revealed a futuristic concept powered by hydrogen and assisted by a battery, four-wheel drive and the world's largest in-car solar panel. The solar panel on the h-tron's roof can generate enough power for 1.7 miles' driving a day. The hybrid battery system is used for boosting acceleration on demand and storing energy generated by braking.

Great finish for a family hatchback

Auto facts

Model: Peugeot 208 Allure 1.6 BlueHdi 100
Price: £17,045
Insurance group: 20D
Fuel consumption (Combined): 83.1mpg
Top speed: 116mph
Length: 397.3cm/156.4in
Width: 200cm/78in
Luggage capacity: 10 cu ft
Fuel tank capacity: 11 gallons/50 litres
CO2 emissions: 87g/km
Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles

By David Duffy
david.duffy@nqo.com

THE first matt-finish car I ever saw on the road was an elegant Bentley Continental GT, cruising through the equally elegant streets of Clifton, Bristol.

Since then, the only other cars I spotted with the less-than-glossy exterior were an Aston Martin Vantage and a Nissan GT-R – both arguably also in the supercar class.

So it was something of a surprise when the Peugeot 208 – the quintessential compact family hatchback – turned up sporting a dark grey matt exterior – or, in showroom speak, Ice Silver textured paint.

It is a very clear hint at the upgrades that have been made to the car, which has been one of the UK's most popular superminis since its showroom debut four years ago.

The latest model sports revised styling, frugal Euro 6-compliant engines and extra equipment.

The test model, with a 1.6-litre turbo diesel engine linked to a five-speed manual gearbox, sported a range of extras including lime/yellow interior trim at £350, a £200 reversing camera and air conditioning at £290.



The Peugeot 208 in matt grey – or Ice Silver – shines in other ways

The compact body is surprisingly spacious with room for five adults and a boot capable of swallowing seven full shopping bags.

A check on the fuel consumption shows a claimed 83.1mpg on the Government's combined fuel cycle, but I could not get anywhere near that figure. However, average daily fuel consumption well into the 60s is no problem, giving a serious touring range on a full tank of fuel.

The new 208 has a more assertive and distinctive look. New two-tone headlamps feature black and chrome masks and

are fitted as standard from the Active trim level and house LED daytime running lights, with cornering-assist fog lights standard on the Allure model.

Priced from about £12,000, the new 208 is available in three and five-door body styles, and comes in four trim levels – Access A/C, Active, Allure and GT Line. For a more performance-oriented body style, the 208 GTi, 208 GTi Prestige and 208 'GTi by PEUGEOT Sport' are available as three-door variants. The paint costs an extra £645, the same as pearlescent finishes, and Peugeot says it needs no special care.

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British Motor Museum Grand reopening after refurbishment

THE British Motor Museum reopens on Saturday, February 13, following a £1.1m refurbishment.

Formerly known as the Heritage Motor Centre, its managing director, Julie Tew, said the new museum would be visually more exciting, with an immersive display of British motoring history, designed to appeal to both current fans as well as new audiences.

Also opening on February 13 is the new Collections Centre, allowing public access for the first time to an extra 250 cars from the reserve collections of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust and the Jaguar Heritage Trust.

Ms Tew said "We are delighted

to reopen the museum to visitors for half term. We have a packed programme of events and tours."

Half term will kick off with "Build a British Car Week" from February 13-21.

Every day children of all ages can join one of a range workshops in the LEGO® Education Innovation Studio where they can get creative building cars with LEGO® bricks.

"How cool is your British car?" takes place on Saturday and Sunday, February 13-14, where children can build a car in the Studio and see where it's placed on the cool wall.

Technic Workshops run from February 15 to 18 build a balloon-

powered car takes place on Friday, February 19; build a rubber band-powered car takes place on Saturday, February 20.

Finally, The 25 Brick Challenge takes place on Sunday, February 21, where children can attempt to build a motor car with 25 Lego bricks and four wheels. All workshops run from 10am-3pm.

Tours of the museum and collections will be available daily and can be booked on arrival.

All half-term family activities are free. Normal museum entry fees apply.

For more details, call 01926 641188 or see britishmotormuseum.co.uk.

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